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| Title                       | Book review: Reza Gholami, secularism and identity: non-Islamiosity in the Iranian diaspora   |
| Authors                     | Heinhold, Chris   |
| Publication date            | 2017  |
| Original Citation           | HEINHOLD, C. 2017. Book review: Reza Gholami, Secularism and Identity: Non-Islamiosity in the Iranian Diaspora. Journal of the Irish Society for the Academic Study of Religions, 5, pp. 93 - 96. |
| Type of publication         | Article (peer-reviewed)   |
| Link to publisher's version | <a href="https://jisasr.org/current-issue-volume-5-2017/">https://jisasr.org/current-issue-volume-5-2017/</a>   |
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| Download date               | 2023-05-05 03:22:39   |
| Item downloaded from        | <a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10468/4435">http://hdl.handle.net/10468/4435</a>   |



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themes, and the former lists will certainly be helpful for teachers and students, among others.

Dowling Long and Sawyer have produced a volume that will be very beneficial to biblical scholars, but those beyond this field will also find it of interest. As the authors note,

The material is arranged in such a way as to enable biblical scholars and other readers with an interest in the Bible to access as many musical uses and interpretations of the Bible as possible while at the same time providing, for the benefit of choirs, musicians, musicologists, lecturers, teachers, and students of music and religious education, a convenient reference tool covering the biblical, liturgical, and theological information that contributes to the appreciation of the music (xxx).

This is an important and timely volume, and is a welcome addition to studies on the reception of the Bible. While there is still much research to be done on the Bible and music, researchers, students, and teachers will find this to be a valuable contribution, and one that fills a substantial need in this lively, if underexplored, area of research.

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***Secularism and Identity: Non-Islamiosity in the Iranian Diaspora*, by Reza Gholami, Surrey, Ashgate, 2015, pp. 227, ISBN 9781472430106, £58.50 (hardback)**

Reza Gholami's book, published as part of a series on migration and diaspora edited by Anne J. Kershner, explores the often overlooked worldview of secular Iranians living in the UK. Reading Gholami's work, we are reminded of the power held by fixed, often subconscious, dichotomies and the importance of challenging such normative notions. In this case, Gholami explores the idea of an Islamic originated secularity, one which emerges from within the Iranian diasporic context. This book, Gholami's first, explores in great depth, through extensive ethnographic research and innovative framing, the concept of an emergent secularity developing from within a specific Muslim community. This is innovative in that it does not assume the adoption of 'Western secularity' from outside the community itself. While establishing this idea of an internally emergent secularity, formulated through conversation with other modes of secularity yet not being driven to imitate or replicate those modes, Gholami challenges

the accepted dichotomy in social sciences, as well as the wider public sphere, of Muslims as either being wholly devout or devoutly secular. Instead, he points to the complexities which exist in reality between these two categories. The book is theoretically dense but this heavy theory is balanced by detailed ethnographic vignettes gathered from Gholami's interviews and extensive fieldwork. The book is divided into seven chapters and bookended by an introduction and short moratorium, the latter of which works well in place of a conclusion allowing space for, and encouraging, further development.

The Iranian diasporic community is portrayed by Gholami as complex and riven with division. It is partly from this complexity that non-Islamiosity emerges. Gholami reports a conversation with one informant in which it is explained that Iranians often, upon seeing a fellow Iranian in public, will stop speaking Farsi and attempt not to be recognised by their co-nationalist. The reason for this behaviour is put forward by Gholami as follows; "there are too many ideological and other differences among Iranians to allow a cohesive and amicable sense of community to exist" (127). While this divisive community dynamic is important to the work, it is not the sole or main focus. Rather, Gholami is interested in what he terms the non-Islamiosity displayed by many of the Iranians he meets and interacts with throughout his study.

Iranians of Christian and Baha'i faiths are mentioned, all be it infrequently, in Gholami's work. He recounts a conversation in which individuals from these backgrounds reported to him that their religion continues to play a large role in their life in the diaspora. They do not feel any need to distance themselves from their faiths, and indeed their religion continues to play a large role in informing their identities. In stark contrast, Iranians from a Shi'a religious background are described throughout the book as feeling isolated from their faith; they "by and large describe Islam as only marginally informing their cultural *habits*" (authors emphasis) (86). Gholami writes about Iranian diaspora organisations that welcome members from all faith backgrounds and make a special effort to promote and emphasise a distinct Iranian identity. This Iranian identity, expressed visibly through the pre-revolutionary flag and pre-Islamic iconography, consciously avoids any reference to Islam (90).

Non-Islamiosity, a neologism proposed by Gholami in spite of its recognised faults as not being the "most linguistically appealing or easily pronounced of words" (5), refers to a specific reaction of Iranian Shi'a to their 'homeland' and, perhaps more specifically, to their homeland post the 1979 Islamic Revolution. While the book's subtitle, 'Non-Islamiosity in the Iranian Diaspora', might suggest that the term and the diaspora under discussion may exist independently of one another, Gholami ties his understanding of non-Islamiosity very closely to an understanding of a

specific Iranian diasporic context. While developing the terms adjective form in the opening chapter, Gholami directly links it to the experience of a particular type of person in the Iranian diaspora, explaining that “the word describes any discourse or practice, constituted by and constituting Iranian migrants from Muslim backgrounds, which proceeds through an explicit or implicit problematisation, stigmatisation or detestation of Islam, or with the objective of distancing itself from, jettisoning or eradicating the Islamic” (37). This connection between an individual who wishes to articulate a diasporic Muslim Iranian identity while distancing themselves, for whatever reason, from the current Islamic Republic of Iran and the term non-Islamiosity is the salient feature of Gholami’s analysis and is returned to throughout the book.

There exists the temptation to read Gholami’s non-Islamiosity as analogous to popular Islamophobic discourse. On more than one occasion, the author himself points to the issue, describing non-Islamiosity as seeking to “eradicate the Islamic” (6). In a discussion of diasporic Iranian media, Gholami argues that much of the content he has seen either seeks to “purify ‘Iran’ and ‘the Iranian’ of all things Islamic” (131), directly challenge the Islamic government of Iran, or present itself as non-political and solely cultural. Conflating Gholami’s conception of non-Islamiosity with straight forward Islamophobic discourse does not do it justice however. This is a far more complex and dynamic theory. Two tales from the book exemplify the complexity well. In the first, Gholami has been invited to an event in a North London park, attended by hundreds of local Iranians and many visitors from Iran who are described to Gholami as coming “to be free for a little while” (117). Gholami explains that in the original Farsi the phrase translated as ‘come to be free for a little while’ has many more casual connotations, such as letting one’s guard down, simply being comfortable, or being oneself (117). There is music, dancing, and alcohol. Gholami tells how an elderly gentleman is gently cajoled into enjoying a glass of vodka by a young friend. Having politely declined at first, the young friend explains the permissibility of consuming alcohol in Islamic terms; “The old man then accepted the drink and was clearly excited at drinking it” (118). The second anecdote drawn from Gholami’s fieldwork concerns a party for the child of a young couple. Again, and despite the age of the child, music, dancing, and, importantly, alcohol, play a large role in the festivities. The alcohol consumption at this party was not enthusiastically endorsed by the young couple themselves but there was a social expectation of permissibility, with one guest going as far as producing a bottle of champagne. Gholami recounts a conversation held with the father following the party during which this social pressure was made clear. Going further still, Gholami recounts how this same man “sometimes said that if he *could*, he would take his religion more seriously and practice it

more piously” (author’s emphasis) (191). Non-Islamiosity in these cases can be seen as complex and dynamic in that it is continuously being negotiated and renegotiated in the social space.

The difficulty of disentangling Gholami’s novel conception of this particularly Islamic mode of secularity from the specific diaspora context that he is addressing should not put fellow scholars off making the attempt. Until this work, no scholarly attention has been paid to groups or individuals from Muslim backgrounds that consciously construct their identities through modes of secularity specific to their own “social, cultural and political histories” (2). The tendency to think of any secularization as being rooted in Western philosophical and political thought needs to be redressed. In this book Gholami has begun to mark out a path for this to take place. While non-Islamiosity as it is presented here, in specific relation to the Iranian diaspora community, may prove difficult to apply to other communities, perhaps where the idea of national identity is not so closely linked to a specific religious affiliation, there does exist scope for the framework to be more broadly applied. This emphasis on further development is pointed at in Gholami’s closing ‘moratorium’ chapter in which he calls for further research and expansion of his theoretical construct.

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